

## Transit traffic: a partial success on the Gotthard Pass



Road haulage over the Brenner Pass continues to increase. © Jimmy.flickr

The Gotthard Pass has seen a historic low in transalpine goods traffic since the adoption of the law governing the modal shift. In contrast, the number of trucks crossing the Brenner Pass continues to increase.

The Swiss Federal Office of Transport FOT has now published its statistics for the year 2016. A partial success on the Gotthard Pass may be celebrated: the number of truck journeys in the past year fell below one million. This is the historically lowest level recorded since 1994, when the Swiss public voted for the “[popular initiative](#) for the protection of the Alpine area from transit traffic”, demanding a shift of goods transport from road to rail. The sum of goods transported remains about the same: while the proportion carried by rail has increased, the proportion carried by road has dropped. The implementation of the modal shift is thus taking small steps in the right direction. The interim target for implementing the law was achieved five years later than planned, however: and the intended limit of a maximum of

650,000 journeys for 2017/2018 is completely unrealistic.

## The Brenner Pass: still stinking

In contrast, on the Brenner Pass the most important Alpine transit route for goods transportation, ever more goods are being transported by road. Even the proportion carried by rail is falling. Here, two thirds of goods are transported by road, the opposite of the situation on the Gotthard Pass. The Brenner Pass between the Italian province of South Tyrol and the Austrian federal state of Tyrol is thus the most important north-south traffic axis in the Alps. The volume of goods transported in tonnes is nearly twice that for the Gotthard Pass and is also much greater than for the other Austrian-Italian and French-Italian Alpine crossings.

## A disappointment for local people

“Politicians have left people on the Alpine passes in the lurch”, says Peter Hasslacher, president of CIPRA Austria. If the route – or even detour – over the Brenner Autobahn is substantially cheaper than using rail, or the more direct route through Switzerland, more than new infrastructure will be needed. “We need immediate measures to tackle the health of the population, a strategy for the modal shift and, finally, solidarity within the Euregio.” He dismisses as “eyewash” the partial traffic ban in Tyrol, which since 2016 has forbidden the transport of goods that are equally suitable for transport by rail, such as stones, waste, wood or motor vehicles. “Those who suffer from this traffic policy adopted by individual Alpine states, regions and the European Union are the residents and the natural environment along the traffic axes.”

## An Alpine-wide traffic policy

Road transport of goods across the Alps has enormous ecological and sociocultural effects on the region as a habitat. Most stakeholders, such as hauliers, port operators, administrations and consumers are already aware of the negative effects, such as air pollution and noise emissions, and are often working on solutions. What is lacking now is an Alpine-wide dialogue for a common traffic policy. AlpInnoCT is active in this respect: it is a three-year project aimed at promoting an Alpine-wide, transnational exchange between players at all levels. CIPRA International is involved in the project via the non-profit body CIPRA International Lab GmbH.

Sources and further information:

[www.tageszeitung.it/2017/03/11/die-brenner-tonnen/](http://www.tageszeitung.it/2017/03/11/die-brenner-tonnen/) (de), [www.alpeninitiative.ch/alpeninitiative/medien/medienmitteilungen/2017/170323\\_verlagerungsziel.html](http://www.alpeninitiative.ch/alpeninitiative/medien/medienmitteilungen/2017/170323_verlagerungsziel.html) (de, fr, it), [www.cipra.org/de/cipra/international/projekte/laufend/alpinnoct](http://www.cipra.org/de/cipra/international/projekte/laufend/alpinnoct) (de, fr, it, sl), [www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/mobilitaet-verkehr/queterverkehr/alpenquerender-queterverkehr.assetdetail.1380581.html](http://www.bfs.admin.ch/bfs/de/home/statistiken/mobilitaet-verkehr/queterverkehr/alpenquerender-queterverkehr.assetdetail.1380581.html) (de, fr, it)

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## Point of view: A "man's world" and "women's work": time to move on

Equal opportunities are still a women’s topic . Yet there are sufficient reasons to treat it as an issue for society as a whole. Everyone benefits – especially in the Alps, believes Barbara Wülser, deputy director of CIPRA International.



Barbara Wülser, deputy director of CIPRA International © Martin Walsler

On 18 and 19 April 2017 the Austrian presidency of the Alpine Convention is inviting participants to the women's conference in Alpbach: one important topic will be the pivotal role that women play in the development of mountain areas worldwide. Women nowadays do not simply wish to be limited to this role, however, and are demanding equal opportunities in training, employment and family work. There will likely be a majority of women represented on the stage and in the audience at Alpbach. Yet equal opportunities should also be a matter for men since both women and men will benefit from shared responsibilities and opportunities.

The economic benefits of more women participating in economic life would be enormous. A study by the International Monetary Fund shows that over 1.6 billion women worldwide could be better integrated into the job market. In western industrial nations, as in the Alpine countries, the greatest hurdles are formed by the lack of childcare possibilities. Women in these countries are at least as well qualified as men; but careers are still far too much of a rarity in part-time employment. And the main burden of economic strength still lies on the shoulders of men. Although gender equality is legally enshrined in Alpine countries, impressions and role images are still often more important than talent or inclination.

Equal opportunities are not the same as assimilation, but rather permit the use of potentials and free spaces. Division of labour means managing everyday life according to one's own needs and possibilities, gaining diverse experiences, being with one's family and, at the same time, participating in professional and social life. Men can cook or play with the children just as well as women. Women can chair meetings or give speeches just as well as men. A society where men and women participate equally in family and working life is more flexible and more resilient, meaning it can react better to change. Especially in the Alps, where economically underdeveloped regions coexist alongside prosperous areas, society is dependent on such resilience. Equal opportunities will mean that the Alps remain an attractive location for people of every sex and age.

Sources and further information:

[www.fraueninbergregionen.at](http://www.fraueninbergregionen.at) , [www.zeit.de/karriere/2013-09/studie-iwf-frauenarbeit](http://www.zeit.de/karriere/2013-09/studie-iwf-frauenarbeit) (de) , [www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2013/sdn1310.pdf](http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/sdn/2013/sdn1310.pdf)

## Networked for the Alps



Learning from each other and realising ideas together: CIPRA's 2016 annual report highlights co-operation in the Alps. © Jenni Kuck

CIPRA is a small organisation that can boast a large network. Its annual report shows how this permits people to tackle the challenges facing the Alps together.

People from various Alpine countries meet for Alpine Convention events, at project meetings and at AlpWeek 2016 to jointly pledge their commitment to sustainable development in the Alps. The 2016 annual report by CIPRA International is dedicated to this co-operation, because change will only come about if we work together.

The annual report tells of encounters, for example between Sandrine Percheval from France and Cassiano Luminati from Switzerland, who met for the first time at AlpWeek. They both work within the CIPRA network and soon began discussing their activities for the Alps, gaining new motivation and ideas from their meeting – just as with many other people and organisations.

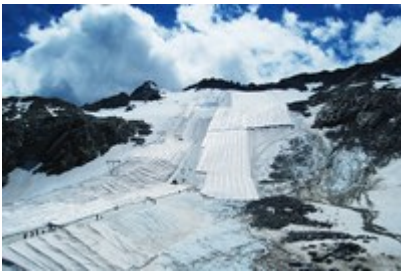
Other gems from the fruitful co-operation between CIPRA International and its various partner organisations include the Alpine-wide co-operation on youth participation, sustainable mobility and climate change. The commitment of national CIPRA bodies to sustainable tourism, regional development and mobility is also always a joint matter. The 2016 annual report is available online in PDF format in the Alpine languages of German, Slovenian, French and Italian, plus English, at:

[www.cipra.org/en/cipra/international/publications/annual-reports](http://www.cipra.org/en/cipra/international/publications/annual-reports)

## Polluted glaciers

Pesticides, herbicides, medicines – all these materials were found at over 2,700 metres above sea level. The water flowing down from the Presena glacier into the valley reflects this state of affairs.

The contaminants found in the glacier are carried by the meltwater and pollute streams, rivers and groundwater. Such disturbing data are the result of a set of samples taken from the Presena glacier in the Adamello group by researchers



People, machines, covers – all leave their traces in the snow and drinking water. © sarabrag.flickr

from the MUSE science & natural history museum in Trento, Italy. The scientists are engaged in a research project concerning the pollution of watercourses.

The substances in question are contained in products used by tourists, such as cosmetics or creams, textile fibres from fleece jackets that now cover parts of the glacier, and particularly pesticides and herbicides from the intensive agricultural methods used. Once the pollutants enter the water cycle, they are distributed by meltwater and rain. The wind can then blow them considerable distances and back up to the glaciers.

long term affect the water quality and also adversely affect human health via the food chain.

While the quantity of pollutants at the moment does not affect the quality of drinking water, the question arises as to how long the water will remain sufficiently clean. The polluted streams are already a problem for aquatic organisms, as a current study in Switzerland shows. The accumulation and sum of the pollutants may in the

Sources and further information:

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## Paddling for the “blue heart” of Europe



Paddlers on their way from the Alps to the sea. © Jan Pimat

The end of March saw the start of the Balkan Rivers Tour in Slovenia, the largest water protection action in Europe. The aim is to protect its last unspoilt rivers.

The river landscapes of the Balkans are important habitats and represent some of Europe's largest natural resources. Around 80% of the 35,000 kilometres of river are still in very good or good condition. The corresponding figure for the rest of Europe is the exact opposite, a mere 20% of all rivers. This “blue heart of Europe” in the Balkans is threatened by the building of some 2,700 dams and power stations. Not even national parks or other protected areas will be spared.

In 2016 the Balkan Rivers Tour came into being. The purpose of the campaign is to draw attention to the negative effects of dams on river ecosystems. On 30 March 2017 around 500 canoeists began paddling on a trip from the source of the River Soča in Slovenia. Some days later, having crossed six frontiers, they reached the sea in Greece. The action is continuing with numerous other accompanying events in the Dinaric Alps as well as on and along the River Morača in Montenegro. As a result, local people become involved in the protest action and are made aware of the issue.

Director of the Balkan Rivers Tour, Rok Rozman, explains: “The rivers are under great pressure from the hydropower lobby”. Despite this pressure, some have so far been spared such expansion. They serve as examples and show that there is another way, as Rok Rozman underscores using the Soča as a case in point: it is a magnet for visitors from Slovenia and tourists from all over the world who find something here that they miss at home.

A further campaign aimed at saving the threatened rivers of the Balkans is RiverWatch's “Save the Blue Heart of Europe”, with director Ulrich Eichelmann awarded the 2014 Grosser Binding Prize for his efforts.

Sources and further information:

[www.balkanriverstour.com](http://www.balkanriverstour.com) , [www.riverwatch.eu](http://www.riverwatch.eu)

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## Economic activity in mountain areas

What can – and cannot – mountain areas do? Two new studies from Germany and Switzerland show the opportunities and weaknesses of regional economies and demonstrate that mountain areas can help in determining their own economic future.

A study on the regional economic effects of tourism, produced by the University of Würzburg in Germany, underlines the significance of the Berchtesgaden national park for the local economy. This large-scale study involved over 11,000



Berchtesgaden in Germany is the gateway to the national park. © Sergiu Bacioiu\_flickr

interviews in the region, asking for example how many local people derive their income solely from tourists. The national park generates gross annual turnover of some 94 million euros and thus makes a large and lasting contribution to the regional economy, while at the same time helping preserve the natural heritage.

A further recent study published by the Swiss think-tank “Avenir Suisse” sheds light on the structural changes in Swiss mountain areas. This study, among other things, investigates how existing sources of value creation can be strengthened and new ones activated. The authors stress the importance of new approaches, for example how external resources are mobilised. This means individuals such as holiday-home owners or employees who could play a greater role. The core message is that the economic future of mountain areas is not a matter of topographic fate, but can also be determined by the areas themselves. Innovative leasing models for existing infrastructure could serve to create an added value chain and generate resources for

the renovation of older properties.

Sources and further information:

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## The wandering classroom



“whatsalp youth” gets young people out of the classroom and into the mountains. © Ashim D’Silva

Young people spend the majority of their school time indoors. The new “whatsalp youth” project moves the classroom into the mountains and learning into the great outdoors.

It is not just in school that young people spend most of their time indoors: in their spare time too, many of them sit in front of the TV or computer. The new “whatsalp youth” project is intended to tempt them to go outdoors. The project is led by CIPRA’s youth advisory council together with CIPRA International and other project partners.

Young people from every Alpine country are meeting in Austria, France and Liechtenstein, where they will also meet the “whatsalp” walking group, consisting of Harry Spiess and Dominik Siegrist. From June onwards they will spend four months crossing the Alps from the Austrian capital Vienna to the French city of Nice, documenting the changes in the Alpine regions as they go. Both groups will walk

some stages together and exchange ideas about the environment, Alpine culture and communication. Indoor workshops will thus be replaced by the open and picturesque landscapes of the Alps, with learning provided along the way.

These young people will be co-ordinating the activities for the “whatsalp” meetings independently, thus learning to develop and implement their own projects. The CIPRA youth advisory council is taking a leading role here, with its members responsible for selecting participants, organising and realising the programme and producing reports. The “whatsalp youth” project is financed by the European Union’s Erasmus+ programme.

Anyone wishing to join the “whatsalp” walkers can find all the necessary information and registration details on the website [www.whatsalp.org](http://www.whatsalp.org).

Sources and further information:

[www.whatsalp.org](http://www.whatsalp.org) , [www.cipra.org/en/cipra/about/people/cipra-youth-council](http://www.cipra.org/en/cipra/about/people/cipra-youth-council)

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## Strange but true...

The Principality of Liechtenstein is famous for its royal family, its banks and its strict immigration policy. The latter is now being extended to its beaver population with extremely restrictive measures. In the smallest country in the Alps, intruders will be hunted down and killed. So far a total of 15 beavers have been culled. The reason is the sensitive nature



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of the flood control points that are not prepared for these migrant animals, who cut down trees, build dams and produce wood chips.

If only these crepuscular and nocturnal creatures would realise that they would be better off doing their work during the day, so that they could then return to their home countries in the evening for a good night's sleep like the thousands of other commuters! Or perhaps the authorities should realise that flood defences can be protected from the beavers' architectural labours by technical means...

[www.lgu.li/projekte/biber](http://www.lgu.li/projekte/biber) (de)

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## Agenda

**WE ARE ALPS TOUR 2017: Call for participants**, 11.-30.04.2017, Alps. [More...](#)

**Photo contest: Water of the Alps** , 11.04.-03.09.2017, Alps. [More...](#)

**International Conference and Exhibition "The Wolf in the Alpine cultural landscape - chances and challenges"**, 16.-18.05.2017, Sölk/A . [More...](#)

**Youth at the top 2017!** , 11.-12.07.2017, Alps. [More...](#)

**Call for papers: Exploring the links between water, food, energy, and mountain ecosystems**, 01.08.2017, Alps. [More...](#)